

# Office of the SWIC Newsletter



## Message from John T. Stevens, Statewide Interoperability Coordinator (SWIC) & Single Point of Contact (SPOC) for FirstNet in NH

### Congratulations New Hampshire! & Happy Holidays!



New Hampshire public safety agencies have in many aspects led the nation in professionalism, integrity, and courage regarding their ability to serve its citizenry and the visitors who grace our state. We have often acknowledged this fact and have been proud to stand in concert with the many initiatives that have set us apart as being an example for not only in New England, but throughout the country. The Statewide Interoperability Executive Committee (SIEC) has always taken the opportunity to not only recognize the possibilities of next generation communications technologies, but have acted aggressively to promote and engage public safety agencies with these prospects. Long recognizing the capability of a product called Mutualink, the Department of Safety, Division of Emergency Services and Communications has committed to working with the SIEC to support this initiative. Further, no one has been more supportive of these initiatives than Governor Sununu. Whether it is our opportunity to provide first responders with the best possible FirstNet capability, working in collaboration with AT&T to develop the FirstNet infrastructure, or now providing funding to connect traditional public safety agencies and non-traditional sites such as Acute Care/Vaccine Sites by taking the necessary steps in preparation to responding to a pandemic. Through this unparalleled interoperability platform called “Mutualink,” Governor Sununu has once again, been at the helm in support of this opportunity.



“True Interoperability” will be the spirit in which New Hampshire can now communicate not only in an emergent situation, but in everyday use as well. New Hampshire through its many efforts to provide a viable communications network, was in most cases individualized and specific to the agency it supported. It did not allow for first responders to communicate across a wide spectrum. Mutualink has now created a communications platform that will connect radio, data, and video across all LMR and LTE networks. New Hampshire is the first in the nation to accomplish this capability and one that, we once again, stand proud and honored in support of our public safety partners. Connected today are all (68) major Public Safety Dispatch Centers statewide, the New Hampshire Department of Safety, the New Hampshire National Guard, Civil Air Patrol, New Hampshire Department of Transportation (DOT), New Hampshire Department of Natural Resources and Economic Resources (DNCR), hospitals, colleges and universities and specifically addressing our preparedness efforts for Acute Care Sites (should they be needed) and Vaccine Sites as we push forward through this pandemic. We now also have direct communications on a common platform with our federal partners at the Department of Justice, FEMA and the US Coast Guard.

The SIEC and SWIC’s Office however, is not only committed to the Mutualink Project, but has a number of initiatives that it continues to manage and oversee through its three working groups, none more important than the FirstNet/AT&T infrastructure expansion statewide. The Data Communications Working Group meets with AT&T engineers quarterly to assess the continued growth of the FirstNet Network showing great progress statewide. In a meeting with FirstNet and AT&T this past fall, it was determined as we engage in discussions on years 6 through 10 of the AT&T contract with FirstNet, this next year (2021) we will coordinate meetings with each county having public safety representatives and county administrators in attendance establishing coverage priorities that will require AT&T’s future attention. Combined with these efforts will be a FirstNet Showcase in the fall of 2021 displaying FirstNet vendor support and FirstNet capabilities that include invitations to our partners throughout New England. In association to this event is the very strong possibility of hosting a FirstNet Executive Board Meeting here in New Hampshire during the event.

The New Hampshire State Police Pilot Project with AT&T continues and is now concluding phase II. Having the opportunity to analyze coverage data, along with having insight from trooper’s practical knowledge and experience with the SONIM phone and usage of WAVE Technology will provide very important information regarding statewide feasibility for State Police transitioning to the FirstNet network. This activity will also provide direct knowledge of areas of the state that will require our attention regarding future negotiations with FirstNet/AT&T on infrastructure expansion.

The SWIC’s Office was happy to participate in the FALLCOMM which was a mini-TERT rally at Lakes Region Mutual Fire Aid. Exercising COMLs and COMTs in preparation to their certification was an important opportunity to ultimately expand the stable of COMLs and COMTs statewide. Presented in this exercise was also the first opportunity to witness the capabilities of Mutualink. Many thanks go to the organizers of this event and the assistance of Mutualink to exhibit its anticipated statewide expansion.

As we conclude 2020, a year like no other and not soon forgotten, we have not sat idly-by and have remained highly engaged whether it was through ZOOM, WebEx, or limited personal contact, 2020 has been immensely successful. I look forward to this continued trend in hopes that sometime in 2021 we will once again, meet in person. From our office to yours, we wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Safe New Year.

*John T. Stevens, SWIC*

*Alyson Fava*





**End of Year Highlights**



**NHSP FirstNet Demo - September 2020**



**FALLCOMM - October 2020**



**FALLCOMM - October 2020**



**FALLCOMM - October 2020**



## **FirstNet Network Expands Across NH to Advance Public Safety Communications Capabilities** *By First Responder Network Authority*

New Hampshire's first responders are getting a major boost in their wireless communications with the addition of new, purpose-built FirstNet cell sites since the end of last year – located in Grafton, Rockingham, Strafford, Merrimack, Cheshire and Belknap counties. This new infrastructure is a part of the FirstNet network expansion taking place across the state, bringing increased coverage, capacity and capabilities for public safety.

New Hampshire Department of Safety Commissioner Robert L. Quinn said: “Throughout New Hampshire, reliable communications is a vital part of the safety and security of our first responders and the people they serve. FirstNet/AT&T is building a communications platform that will benefit New Hampshire's public safety first responders, but there is still work to be done. I look forward to FirstNet/AT&T's ongoing efforts to improve communications across all of New Hampshire.”

On top of the purpose-built FirstNet sites, AT&T has also launched additional new cell sites over the past year in 8 towns, including Exeter, Bedford, Alton, Rumney, Boscawen, Concord, Bradford and Wolfeboro. AT&T also recently completed updates to more than 200 existing cell sites across New Hampshire, which will significantly expand coverage to many areas of the state. These sites provide coverage with AT&T LTE spectrum as well as Band 14 spectrum. Band 14 is nationwide, high quality spectrum set aside by the government specifically for FirstNet.

In addition to further elevating public safety's connected experience in support of their emergency response, this new infrastructure will also help improve the overall coverage experience for AT&T wireless customers in the area. Residents, visitors and businesses can take advantage of the AT&T spectrum bands, as well as Band 14 when additional capacity is available.

Owen Smith, President, AT&T New Hampshire, said: “AT&T is committed to reinforcing and enhancing our New Hampshire network. These uncertain times have highlighted just how important fast, reliable communication tools are to all of us, from students and teachers to doctors and nurses to families and businesses. Through strong collaborations and by utilizing an array of innovative resources, AT&T is working to ensure New Hampshire's first responders and residents have the best possible coverage now and in the future. Working with public safety and the Governor's office, we've made FirstNet nimble, adaptable and ready to scale for even the most severe situations as we're seeing currently with COVID-19. We are grateful to all those involved in helping bring about these important enhancements and those still to come.”

### **Prioritizing Public Safety Communications**

FirstNet is the only nationwide, high-speed broadband communications platform dedicated to and purpose-built for America's first responders and the extended public safety community. It's built with AT&T in a public-private partnership with the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet Authority) – an independent agency within the federal government.

That's why AT&T has a responsibility unlike any other network provider. And unlike commercial

networks, FirstNet provides real, dedicated mobile broadband when needed with always-on priority and preemption for first responders. This helps ensure New Hampshire first responders connect to the critical information they need – every day and in every emergency. Plus, it’s giving first responders unthrottled access to the nation’s fastest overall network experience.

John T. Stevens, Statewide Interoperability Coordinator, New Hampshire Department of Safety, said: “Collaboration has made the FirstNet/AT&T experience in New Hampshire a promising reality. The partnership created is unparalleled as we continue to uniformly identify areas in need. We remain encouraged that the investments being made today and in the future will enhance Public Safety Communications statewide for generations to come.”

FirstNet is the only nationwide platform that gives first responders an entire communication ecosystem of unique benefits including mission-centric devices, certified applications and always-on, 24-hours-a-day priority and preemption across voice and data. This is like giving public safety communications the “lights and sirens” treatment so that they stay connected, no matter the emergency.

“FirstNet is a dedicated broadband platform for public safety, by public safety,” said FirstNet Authority CEO Edward Parkinson. “We worked hand-in-hand with New Hampshire’s public safety community to understand their needs for the network. And these network enhancements are a prime example of how that input and feedback is becoming a reality. We look forward to supporting the state’s first responders’ use of FirstNet to help them save lives and protect communities.”

The new FirstNet sites were identified by state and public safety stakeholders as priority locations. With FirstNet, it’s about where first responders need connectivity. Every day. And in every emergency. That’s what is driving our FirstNet build. These sites were constructed using Band 14 spectrum, as well as AT&T commercial spectrum. AT&T has also deployed Band 14 on more than 200 sites across New Hampshire.

FirstNet is built for all public safety. That means every first responder in New Hampshire – career or volunteer; federal, tribal, state or local; urban, suburban or rural. That’s why connecting remote parts of America is one of our top priorities. We’re also collaborating with rural network providers to help build out additional LTE coverage and extend FirstNet’s reach in rural communities.

The COVID-19 health crisis illustrates precisely why public safety fought for the creation of FirstNet. Where public safety goes, we go. We’ve answered the call for tornadoes, hurricanes, wildfires, floods and other natural disasters. But with COVID-19, it is like experiencing a perpetual emergency in every community across the country. Public safety’s network is being tested in a completely new way, and it’s hitting the mark.



Have a news story you’d like us to feature? Drop us a line.  
NHSWIC@dos.nh.gov | [www.nh.gov/firstnet](http://www.nh.gov/firstnet)

 @NHInterop

 [facebook.com/nhinterop](https://facebook.com/nhinterop)

 [linkedin.com/company/nhinterop](https://linkedin.com/company/nhinterop)

